519 had been satis-
628 the loss was
a village
[411] The matter
[531] the Bebai
fied since
greater; their
chief, while
young man.
influence of
to Bebai and
fighting.
From this
628 the Pangwe
682 ple of an eye
tooth, and
only when
equal. In a
Esseng
ple had been
be concluded

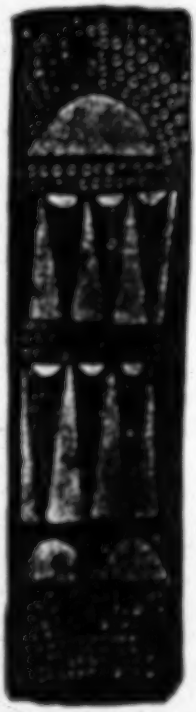

Fig. 84. Wooden Shield.

fied, because on either side
exactly the same: each had
burned and a man killed.
would have gone on, because
people were still dissatis-
they regarded their loss as
casualty had been a great
the other had been only a
However, by this time the
the Whites had penetrated
thus an end was put to the

example it can be seen that
act according to the princi-
for an eye, a tooth for a
that blood revenge can cease
the losses on both sides are
"war" between Schumu and
people, eight Schumu peo-
killed, and peace could not
until eight Esseng men had
likewise been killed. Furthermore, it can be seen that village feuds fraught with consequences often arise from quite trivial causes.

● 72] Prisoners are usually killed and then often eaten, as has been
[266] mentioned earlier. Only children are raised as "slaves" in the
[521] village. Captured women are usually taken by the victors as wives, but sometimes they are also killed in order to even out the number of killed on both sides and thus to make peace possible. /251/

837 "Etudes sur le Pays Pahouin [Study on the Pahouin Country]," op. cit.

"friendship wife"), show, as does the freedom just referred to, that the curbing of adultery can be explained by social reasons which are quite alien to sexuality.

The possibility of raping women of neighboring people during the time of conquest, the possibility of buying foreign women at a good price, so long as the slave trade lasted, permitted the "chiefs" of groupings to remedy the dangers due to the unsatisfied desires of the young men. Apparently the Fang do not display, as do some people, (2) signs of unsatisfied sex due to the fact that

2. Cf. R. Bastide, Sociologie et Psychanalyse [Sociology and Psychoanalysis], pp. 160-161.

women remain the property of the older men. What is sought is the legal possession of the woman, let us say, for the many advantages it entails, rather than sexual possession. And in this sense the justification brought forward by L. Mba can be understood when he writes, "It was not material satisfaction of the senses which drove the Pahouins to polygamy, but many other reasons. . . ."

When the marriage is consummated, the woman goes from a state of near liberty to one of strict sexual control. The specific painful physical penalties for adultery to which the woman alone is subject are particularly severe: being exposed naked before the assembled village, being tied to the ant tree, excision of the clitoris or pimento torture, various mutilations. When the woman, either by flight or by rape, leaves the grouping into which she married, the whole group reacts violently. It is the cause of fights, kidnaping, and pillaging of the village that has taken her in. (3) There is the most absolute contrast between this control

3. "Hence, conflicts that last for years, expressed through kidnaping of women and ending in gunshots," Libreville, Archives of 1909. And

554 regions where the Fang population seems relatively old, instability
622 is the rule for a large proportion of the groupings. There is thus a sort of vicious circle: mobility imposed by long-range conquest has prevented the [138] establishment of a hierarchical organization and this "lack" results in an unrestrained instability.

The social system does not show any elements favorable to a better hierarchical organization. While the pre-eminence of the eldest is accepted, that of the eldest lineage (from which, among the Ba-kongo, the "crowned chief" is selected) is barely maintained. On the contrary, we have shown that there is a nearly constant tension between this lineage and those of the "younger"
[567] brothers. On the other hand, the absence of domestic slavery indicates the wish to prevent any development of inequality. During
[727] the entire period of great conquests the Fang have had only two solutions in relation to conquered foreigners: to destroy or to adopt. And while the eldest appears to be the regulator of the economic and political life, and to be responsible for the worship of the ancestors, his authority is subject to an effective control. It counts only within the framework of groupings of limited extent. It is open to the criticism of the men of the nd'è bòt (who consider themselves the equal of the eldest who only acts "by delegation") or of the council members when the village contains several minor lineages. It also remains in competition with occasional authorities.

If it is true that seniority almost automatically creates authority, this authority is also limited and often threatened by the principle that "the most capable" is the most influential. In the fairly large villages, the position of chief (one should rather say the regulator and intermediary with foreign groupings, which the word ntòl specifically means) is generally passed on from eldest son to eldest son (or, in default, from eldest [son] to a younger brother on the same segment) in the lineage descended from the founder. This is on condition that the successor is approved by all "for his bravery, his wealth, and his eloquence." (1) In the opposite case, a stronger

1. L. Mba, Coutumier Pahouin [Pahouin Customs], p. 12.

personality is chosen from among the eldest of another nd'è bòt in the village. In other respects this authority is controlled by a council

spoke of ôlo (or mon ôlo) or étu'a as against nti (nté) or mo'nti, the latter word meaning freeman, civis. However, all the late nineteenth century writers agree that the Pahouin did not know of slavery and, closer to our period, L. Mba repeats the assertion, declaring that belô or minsagha were not slaves but prisoners of war "considered part of the spoils" (no. 120).

Nevertheless, it does indeed seem that there were genuine commercial transactions, selling and buying of these captives or, at any rate, of the bitu'a, whose position must have been different from that of the bo' belo. The latter were more likely prisoners subject to ransom (ngôtô = ransom) or hostages; I have personally known elderly Boulou men of good family who were prisoners of the Bané in the way after the 1885 ôban /war/. They had been treated as men not as chattel, taking part in noble masculine activities such as hunting, but not in work considered menial like porterage. Some of them married Bané girls at the time of the treaty which followed the ôban; others were adopted by Bané clans. In their case one certainly could not speak of slavery.

The position was not the same for the bitu'a (1), who were, as I

1. Sometimes called bityi'ityi'a, the mutilated, the gashed, because their ears were slashed.

made the objects of commercial transactions, of sales, and not simply put in pawn. First lieutenant Dominick, for instance, bought outright from Ewôndo chiefs part of his complement of porters. These bitu'a were not Pahouin but foreign prisoners from neighboring tribes or the original inhabitants of conquered territory. Therefore it is perhaps correct to say that the Pahouin had no slaves among themselves of their own, but not that they were unacquainted with slavery. They certainly made little use of it, preferring to exchange captives for merchandise from the coastal or river tribes who specialized in trade. Besides, the children of belô or of bitu'a born within a clan must have been pretty easily absorbed if one of the parents belonged to the clan.

At the present time, in any case, the distinction between bo' beti and bo' belo is very fine drawn (2), not to say obliterated, if only

territory, though each keeps its own autonomy without intermingling.

Each of the four Fan groups are divided into tribes, each with its own chief, territory, and autonomy; none is subordinate to another, all the more so because slaves are not taken in war, for unredeemed captives are promptly eaten.

The tribes vary in importance according to the level of development, the kind of chiefs they have had, and the size of their territory. Thus, the Yenkwax possess no more than three sparsely populated villages, and at the most they can muster 300 warriors; the Yengon, [14] though a long-established tribe, have only one village and a few warriors; while the Yemvi, on the contrary, inhabit several hundred villages and number thousands of warriors. But about this term "tribe," let me here mention a very important point: at present, and since a migration which, according to my own research, should be dated 32 or 33 generations back, no more tribes are being formed, only clans. Existing tribes (and we shall see in a moment how they may be distinguished from clans) may be said to have been established about ten centuries ago in our reckoning, which clearly does not mean that they did not exist before that time. Their origin must certainly go back much earlier.

A tribe rarely remains homogeneous for long. Many factors contribute to its splitting up, such as a series of migrations, family disputes, and the activities of heads of families who are ambitious or eager to throw off excessive authority. The steady growth of a tribe at the same time leads to the overpopulation of villages and the necessity of looking elsewhere for new hunting and agricultural lands; hence, after an indefinite period, a tribe splits into clans composed of an unspecified and highly variable number of families. Some clans are very large, such as the Esingi, and make up hundreds of villages, while others, either because they are very recent or because of the same disintegrating forces as exist for the tribes, number only a few families.

Clans in turn, as a result of the same circumstances that made tribes split into clans, split into subclans, also of varying importance.

From what I have just said, a fact may be immediately deduced which runs counter to the usual generalizations accepted by Europeans and superficial observers. In the view of the latter the

553 arrival of a stranger. Hence, a certain number of names that at first would seem totemic, because they copy the names of animals and plants, are not so at all. In general, the eldest son's name is that of one of his forebears, a grandfather or ancestor, who is thought to come to life again in him. Twins, [845] however, always receive special names of matched things, which go in twos, like Sun and Moon, Wind and Rain, Storm and Thunder, etc.

851 As soon as the child has been given a name, his father 779 takes it in his arms and carries it into his hut, where he opens the évora biéri and puts the baby down on the lid. He then takes the ancestral skulls one by one and puts them on the child's head, then places the family totem in its hand. The father with his fingernail often scrapes a bit off of the antelope horn holding the remnants of his personal totemic sacrifice, and puts some of this into the child's mouth. This, strictly speaking, is the dedication to the totem. The father then takes the baby back to its mother so that she may anoint it with oil and rub it with red wood. After the mother, or any other woman present, has attended to this, the father again takes the child and puts another bit of the totem into its mouth. A she-goat, a sheep, or at least a fowl is then offered to the family totem and to the spirits of the departed, according to sacred ritual. The remains [779] of this sacrifice, the ashes, etc., are enclosed in a small antelope horn, which is hung around the baby's neck or above his genital organs: this will be his amulet. Finally, the father gives the baby his personal totem, which will be recalled to him later on when he is old enough to understand. At that same time he will be taught what are the family, clan, and tribal totems, and the duties and obligations they impose on him. This instruction is part of the mébara. [572]

2. Adoption

597 In certain cases, a few children are adopted by a head of ● 727 the family when given as ransom for murder or spared in the

597 sacking of a village. For, although in such cases all the men
727 and able-bodied youths are ruthlessly killed and eaten, this
does not apply to women and children, even to male children,
who henceforth belong to the new tribe and will later be looked
upon as warriors. There is no ceremony for women or female
[562] children, since, as we have seen, the totem ignores them,
and they have only one duty toward it, to hide in their huts as
quickly as possible whenever there is talk of the totem, and
never to mention it. Should this nevertheless happen, it would
be an offense requiring expiation.

597 Male children are adopted by the various heads of a family.
Tribal or village chiefs have first choice, the rest of the
warriors come after. The one or more children chosen by a
chief, however, may never succeed him.

597 Adoption ceremonies are like those at birth. The adopted
304 child loses all his old totems in order to acquire those of the
tribe he joins. There is just one additional ceremony, blood-
letting. So as to prove his definitive entry into the tribe, he
undergoes the following operation when led before the totem.
With the mfor knife, a small steel blade kept for this purpose,
the adoptive father makes a few slight scarifications on the child's
left arm, collects the blood that flows, and throws it on the
ancestral skulls, then on the akaméyón. He then takes a frag-
ment of skull and some totemic sacrificial ashes and rubs these
vigorously on the child's arm. This is the true sign of adoption,
by which the boy definitively enters his new family and is
recognized as belonging to it entirely. Later on he may even
be allowed to take a wife from his former tribe, in spite of the
strict law of exogamy, because adoption is so authentic.

[848 Often the same bloodletting and blood alliance occur
563] with illegitimate children or with mulattoes, but the object is
then different. Adoption never takes place at birth but much
later, so as to ensure for the child the ancestors' protection.
The same act often occurs when a child is ill. [573]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

bread-winners and some are strong and muscular, while many more are weak and worn out from ceaseless toil.

The Fang make good carriers, and will do a splendid day's journey even in the wet season with bad forest trails, if not overloaded. A carrier's load should never exceed 25 kilogrammes; and 20 would pay better on a long journey. The first day out with a caravan the men usually drag along slowly, until their loads settle well down in the *kingi* and fit their backs. The *kingi* is a very ingenious contrivance for carrying a load in; it is usually made from a forest vine with a plaited head strap. To hurry carriers the first day is a bad mistake; poorly adjusted loads chafe and cause sore backs, and before night the whole caravan is tired out and sulky. It is a wise traveller in Africa as elsewhere who knows how to save his men.

A very noticeable fact among the Fang is the scarcity of old men. I attribute this largely to the ravages of syphilis; the same terrible disease that has done so much towards the degeneration of numerous coast tribes, and which is already playing fearful havoc among the Fang. Indolent, untrustworthy and warlike, they are nevertheless a most companionable people. The slightest piece of drollery or a joke immediately causes laughter. It has been my privilege to visit many foreign lands including China, Japan and Korea, yet never in my life have I met such an absolutely good-natured, fun-loving people as the Fang.

The men are not fond of work. They frequently ask me for something to do to "earn a cloth." If I tell them to cut fence poles or good clean bark in the forest, they decline. A male Fang's idea of work is to sit in the *Abeng* (= palaver house) and make fish lines by rolling pineapple fibre along the upper portion of his thigh, or to manufacture *Abi* (roof thatch). At these occupations he can converse with all comers, hear the news and take his part in talking a palaver. They are a revengeful people and will keep up a palaver over a woman for many years. If they do not succeed in shooting a man during a palaver they do not hesitate to fire at and kill a woman, while captives held as hostages are often treated with great cruelty.

The women regard virtue very lightly. Before marriage a girl can do nearly as she pleases. It is absolutely safe to state that it would be almost impossible to find a maiden in a Fang village over sixteen years of age. Adultery is common, and one of the chief causes of "women palavers." Women rank first in value as goods for trade, next in value are goats, then guns and cloth. The greed for goods has a strong hold on the people. They learn quickly but have very little originality. They have no obscene rites. Their habits are very dirty; they will wash in a small pool of water and, while bathing, fill the gourds or imported jugs with the water in which they are washing and use it for domestic purposes. In many other ways they are absolutely filthy, and descend to the level of brute creation. They are not over-burdened with modesty, both sexes frequently bathe together in a perfectly nude condition. A male Fang passes a large percentage of his time in

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9·Fang FH9

266 114 that a man had been killed and eaten only two days before at the town of Olunda two miles below Nenge-nenge. Old king Kelun at Nenge-nenge confirmed the report, and in compliance with my request, loaned me an interpreter to accompany me to the place.

The tide being favourable, I decided to start without telling my boat boys the reason for my hasty departure. Olunda is quite close to the river bank, but upon our arrival the water had fallen so low that the only way to reach the town was by wading knee deep in mud up the bank. The people eyed our boat and myself in particular with marked suspicion, and much talking was indulged in during our landing. The headman was the most villainous looking specimen of a Fang I have ever met; he was well built and very muscular, but his face was extremely ugly and brute-like: he had only one eye, and an evil-looking one it was. He wore on his head an old red worsted trade cap, and smoked a dirty native clay pipe.

The object of my visit was well hidden, and we chatted on various matters in the palaver house. When I expressed a desire to walk through the town and treat any of his sick people, the headman said, "No sick here, people all away, let us talk in the *abeng*" (palaver house). However, without giving him any notice I presently left the palaver house and walked out into the main road, and the crowd followed. The headman repeatedly assured me that the town was not worth seeing; but I strolled leisurely along. Half-way through the town I noticed a quantity of intestines strung out to dry on sticks, and to the great annoyance of the headman and people, I made an examination of them which convinced me that they had been removed quite recently from a human body. I was assured that thay were *entrails from a deer* and were being dried for the purpose of covering gourds to hold gunpowder. I then told the people the reports I had heard, also that I knew the intestines then drying were human, and accused them of cannibalism. They were very indignant, and declared, as all Fangs do, that their tribe never eat men. "Oh no, people in the far bush did, only bad Fang did so." A few moments later I picked up a human clavicle in the palaver house and took it away with me, threatening to report the matter to the Government.

In the palaver house of this same town was a boy of about sixteen years, in ● [727] chains, held as a hostage. I arranged to return in a few days and try to bring the lad to our mission station, but upon my return I again stopped at Nengi-Nengi, and then heard that the boy had been killed and eaten shortly after my departure.

266 I am inclined to believe that the reason for eating human flesh by the Fang is the result of a craving for animal food. The victims are generally males captured either in war, or members of other tribes waylaid and killed while journeying in the bush.

A Fang man told me that once he ate "some man" because he was persuaded to, and that it "passed goat far" (much superior to goat). He added, "I never do

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

fifteen) take their flint-lock muskets, heavily loaded with trade powder and a handful of broken iron pot (iron trade pots) or small stones, and creep up close to the town after dark. Two men try to enter the town unobserved; if they succeed, then they knock at the door of a hut and say, "We are strangers travelling; give us fire and food." Directly a person inside the house opens the door, both men discharge their guns into the house, and immediately run for the bush toward their comrades. The whole town is soon in pursuit, and unless careful they run into an ambuscade prepared for them. A fight may occur, but more often the attacking party return to their town in triumph, shouting: "We are real men, we are real men, we have been to town, we have shot a man (or woman), we are men —real men." There is great rejoicing in their town, and a dance follows. If the palaver is a serious one, the town is often stockaded with split logs placed vertically in the ground; huts are likewise stockaded. Poisoned bamboo spikes are buried in the forest paths to wound the feet of an enemy. The weapons used and relied on to-day are flint-lock muskets. Spears are rapidly falling into disuse. The cross-bow is only used for shooting birds and small bush cats. It is a mistaken idea that the arrows used with the cross-bow are poisoned. Shields are not used. The chief causes of war are disputes over women, hence called "women palavers," and these feuds may last for years. Prisoners are often permitted to starve to death, and are occasionally killed and eaten. Owing to a bitter feud it is often impossible for the women to work in the gardens or fish on the river, the consequence being a great scarcity of food. In Foulabifong, where I resided, a woman palaver lasted over ten months, and the three adjoining towns were in a state of famine. A prisoner was nearly starved to death, and I had to repeatedly plead for him. During these feuds many women are shot while walking the paths. The Fang think it quite correct to shoot a woman; they say, "It is always *safe* to shoot a woman because she cannot shoot back." Prisoners are frequently exchanged, others are held as hostages.

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Abal (war). Translation.

If people are going to war they go in crowds. If they approach near the town (of the enemy) they hold a council. An old man (one) he says thus: We will go to fire when? Then the others say, We will go in the night. Then they stay (sit) there until night. Darkness comes, and they light a torch. Then two or three people go to the town, and the other people remain in the bush. If the people who went to the town find people sleeping, then they point their guns inside a house and fire. Then people die. Then they go back running to meet the other people. Then they all gather in one place and return singing to their own town. Then they beat the drum and rejoice. Then the people who remained in the town say: Tell us the news as you went. Then they tell the news. Then the headman sits down and tells all the people in town that a person must not go anywhere alone. Then all the people hear, and all sit down (remain around their town to await events).

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